

MISSOURI VALLEY COLLEGE



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*Reflections*

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MISSOURI VALLEY COLLEGE

Number Four

Spring 1965

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FOUR POEMS

by Hiram Davis

1

Walking down the street one sunny day,  
I saw two children.  
Sounds of play, laughter, joy filled the air.  
Approaching, all became quiet.  
The little girl looked up . . .  
Big blue eyes, blonde hair, an angel-like expression,  
Said, "Hi, nigger!"  
I asked if she had heard the word "prejudice."  
She said, "No."  
She was too young for that word;  
She never heard Mommie or Daddy use it.  
Besides, she didn't like its sound.  
I smiled and walked on,  
While sounds of childish innocence,  
Play, laughter, and joy filled the air . . .

2

I met an old man by the river,  
His face was a thick brown,  
Sunned by many suns.  
He showed me shells and shells  
That he had collected.  
I asked him what he did . . .  
He replied, "Walk by the river . . ."

3

Let's give  
The past to yesterday,  
The present to today  
The future to tomorrow.  
Now is the time  
To unify all mankind.

4

Engulfed in color,  
My personality is lost  
In relation to you.

1

## WALKING

Walk beneath the stars at night,  
Then close your eyes to the heavenly sight,  
And dream, if you will, of the one you love,  
As you walk beneath the stars.

If your eyes are shut, your heart will be  
Open to God's will and touch,  
As near as a hand, as near as your breath,  
As you walk beneath the stars.

Open your eyes to the heavenly sight,  
Her image is in God's heavenly place,  
So say a prayer to the one you love,  
As you walk beneath the stars.

—Jack Margeson

## A DEFINITION

April,  
A bundle of smiles with no tears,  
A little girl who knows no fears,  
Laughter and music to the ears,  
A queen who has no peers,  
A star,  
A girl of song,  
An imp who knows no wrong,  
Gentle, kind, young, and strong,  
A child, a child —  
But for how long?

—Cheryl Price

## TIME

Time is  
A mile no one can walk,  
A journey without end  
Stretching beyond our reach.  
It passed me a second ago,  
And as I write this,  
It is leaving me  
Far behind.

In time everything happens—  
A sparrow is born,  
An eagle dies,  
A man speaks forth,  
A tyrant lies.  
How can I spend my time?

Everyone asks that question,  
But no matter how many answer  
It remains a question.  
I could write a letter,  
Talk to a friend.  
No matter what I choose,  
Time and my writing this  
Cannot end . . .

—Cheryl Price

## THE BLACK DIAMOND OF ARIZONA

by Cheryl Price

Cowboys called him "The Black Diamond." They said no horse could ever match him in beauty, speed, or brains. He stood fifteen hands high and was all black except for a diamond-shaped tuft of white hair on his finely molded face. To some he gave the impression of containing an energy force unknown to man. For he could run, and continue running, while those that pursued him fell away on winded horses. Then, sure none could catch him, he would turn and scream defiance at those who dared to follow. When he ran, his hoofs sent up clouds of dust from the desert plains. The dust wrapped and encircled his straining legs and body. Many who saw him swore the dust was sent by the devil to carry the horse just beyond their reach.

He was the proud last of a herd that had roamed the plains and rugged mountains of the northern Arizona frontier. Those who saw him running across the desert sage or standing on some barren cliff always saw him alone. Sad, yet defiant and proud! His home had been taken from him as it had from the Apache. The Apache had failed in all efforts to capture him and his wild herd. They called him "The Black Phantom," because he knew the canyons, plains, and mountains better than they, and when chased would always seem to vanish among them. When telling of him the Apache always spoke with a certain awe, as if he were a wild God. Not so, the white man. To them he was the devil incarnate.

Arizona no longer belonged to the Apache for whom Black Diamond had felt a certain kinship, despite their attempts to rob him of his freedom. Arizona was now the home of the white man. For horses and Indians there was no longer any room. Not unless they submitted to the white man's way were they allowed to stay in their natural homes. Submission was the only word the white man understood. They had captured Black Diamond's herd over which he had been king. They had done it quickly. And, now he seemed the only obstacle left to their conquering of this wilderness. He symbolized all that would not submit to man.

Black Diamond looked over the range which had once been his home. Here, on what the white man called Indian Mound, he could see fenced-in ranches. He could see water holes, which he had known as a young colt, surrounded by the fences of the many homesteaders. The roads they had were

of steel and cut his land in two. He had been born not far from this cliff, where the town, Sand Gulch, now darkened the horizon. He wished he could return there, but the danger from man was too great. Danger was now approaching from the East. He could see a man on horseback. So, Black Diamond threw up his head and screamed with anger and grief. The mountains seemed to reply in sympathy. The young man stopped, looked at Black Diamond, then quickened his pace to Sand Gulch.

Sand Gulch wasn't much of a town. Like most of those in the West it seemed to be made up of a few saloons, a general store, and a few other shacks. The man that Black Diamond had screamed at minutes before dismounted from his sweating horse and walked into the nearest saloon. Four cowboys were at the bar toying with their drinks as they recounted the day's events. A mirror on the wall opposite them reflected their tanned and weather-beaten faces. A sharp contrast to that of the newcomer's.

In a chair, in a corner at the bar's left sat an old man puffing on a pipe. His face was dark, almost the color of an Indian's; white hair stuck out in disarray from an old hat, which seemed as worn as its wearer. In the center of the room, a man in his late 30's sat. He had black hair and a dark complexion, although not as dark as the old man's. And, he was deeply engrossed in a poker game. Two younger men stood behind him and watched him place his bets. The three cowboys involved in the game were sitting forward on their wooden chairs, waiting for the next play, when the newcomer, evidently a greenhorn, burst forth with his story. The cowboys at the bar and at the card table pricked up their ears when the greenhorn told of seeing a beautiful horse, black as ebony, near the town.

"That horse stood on a barren cliff, its mane blowing in the wind. And, as I watched, it screamed. It scared the livin' daylights out o' me. I thought for a minute it was cursing me for something."

Out of the silence that followed, the man—in his 30's—stood up. He was thin and angular. Everyone waited for him to speak. "Was that horse all alone?"

"Why, come to think of it, it was," answered the greenhorn. "Why?"

All ignored the question in the rush that followed. Drinks were put down at the bar and cards at the table. Chairs were shoved back as men stood up. A self-appointed leader yelled, "Come on, fellas. It's that cursed Black Diamond at Indian Mound. Maybe we'll catch the devil this time."

The saloon soon emptied of all but the surprised young greenhorn and the old man who had sat in the corner smoking

## CALL OF THE DARK

by Hugh Cochran

his pipe. Slowly the old man rose and walked toward the green-horn. "I could tear you apart for what you just did," he said angrily. "If, it wasn't that you didn't know what you was doin.' You just killed that horse, fellah. He can't live as a slave to any man."

"Oh, come off it, old man. That horse will be a lot better off on a ranch being of use to someone instead of running wild on the plain I just crossed."

"So you believe it, too," said the old man.

In the meantime, Black Diamond still stood on Indian Mound. Slowly he started down the rocky trail that led to the cliff. When he reached the base, he stopped and shook his head. Then, he looked toward the town where many of his herd had been taken. He started forward but stopped. A cloud of dust was coming fast from that direction.

A moment later his flashing eyes made out horses with men on their backs. As they came closer one yelled, "Look, there he is! We'll catch him this time sure."

Black Diamond stood and watched them, muscles relaxing then tensing. He turned and started slowly up Indian Mound. The cowboys reached for their lariats. A few even got set to throw, before Black Diamond started at them. He leaped forward as he began to run. Naked hoofs struck stones and drew blood when he raced over the trail he had just left. Sweat glistened on his body.

The cowboys turned up the trail. Their dust-streaked faces gleamed confidence. One yelled, "We've got him this time! There's no way down that trail."

One of the youngest of the cowboys spoke, "Don't be too sure, Red. I don't like the way we have him cornered. It's too easy. Not like the chases of the past."

"What's the matter, Bill? This dust affecting you? We're almost to the cliff itself. He can't go any further. Say - - - what's the matter . . ."

The man, addressed as Bill, had turned a deathly white. He watched as Black Diamond spun around to face them. Then, before anyone could throw a rope Black Diamond reared, turned, and leaped off the red cliff to the rocks below.

No one spoke. The cowboys who had been so excited sadly put their lariats back on their saddles. Silently, they started toward town to the drinks and the cards they had left behind. All would remember "The Black Diamond" of Arizona. All would know a moment's shame.

It had been snowing throughout the night and there were nearly six inches of the soft white stuff covering his tent. The dream of sitting in his favorite chair, warming his toes before the fire, warming his stomach with each swallow of hot toddy were suddenly pierced by the cold as it swept into the sleeping bag. The early morning sky was gray and bleak; the air stung his nostrils as he drew it in. But the smell of bacon and eggs, the warmth of hot coffee and the thoughts of the day's adventure soon left him oblivious to shivers.

By the time the 12-gauge rested lightly over his shoulder and in his hand were a string of decoys and a thermos of coffee, his thoughts comforted him. Nature seemed to caress him with its wintry beauty. Ahead lay the lake beneath a coverlet of ermine, its shores bounded by a stubble of reeds indicating the marsh. Already he could hear the ducks squawking in the open water at the south end.

With his hands gripping the gunnels, he pushed the little pram out into the crystal gray water. The ducks had left long before, but as he set the decoys he could see them flying in formation along the far shore. Within half an hour they would return and after inspecting their feeding ground, would dive down to join their friends bobbing inanimately in the ripples.

Sitting quietly in his blind nestled in the reeds, he heard a mallard susie quack in the distance. The air was still over the lake so he answered the call with a series of short squawks. Closer came the duck, eying the decoys carefully. Then suddenly she dropped, and just as suddenly he heard the roar of the shotgun in his ear. He paddled out to where the mallard lay and scooped her out from among the decoys. A good-sized one, he thought, and already he could taste the savory meat as he put the duck in his creel.

It was later in the afternoon when the evening breezes began to stir among the reeds, causing them to talk to themselves, that he thought of himself returning to camp, the creel heavy on his shoulder. One more bird and he would have his limit for the day. He thought of cleaning the gun and of the pleasant memories that would flow through his mind. He saw himself breaking camp and thought of the long drive home.

He could see his wife waiting for him at the door with a cup of warm coffee, a warm kiss, and plenty of questions.

From the distance came the whistling of a flock of teal. Had he heard it? He thought, he hoped they would decoy in. It had been several days since he had seen any teal. They were such tiny birds, the smallest of the duck family. Then he saw them; the green bars on their wings were distinctive. He tried to imitate their whistle-like call, but failed miserably. It looked as if they would swing wide and continue south. Then, as if drawn by a magnet, the lead drake swooped and the others followed.

He was standing now; he had a good lead on the diving bird. The gun roared; an empty shell flew over his shoulder. Another shot, and this time the drake faltered, flew a hundred yards, and dropped straight onto the ice, ten feet from the open water.

Again the hunter climbed into his little boat, and soon was paddling past the decoys to the ice on the far side. He could see the duck clearly now. The shot had caught it in the wing. But how would he get the boat and himself onto the ice? He sat as far astern as he could; with a mighty shove on the paddle he sent the uplifted bow onto the ice. Quickly he lurched forward into the bow before the boat could slide off the ice, and gingerly placed one foot over the edge, allowing his weight to shift slowly onto it. The ice was holding. He approached the bird with caution, placing each foot so as not to waken the sleeping ice. The bird was in his hand. It was warm to the touch. A small trickle of blood oozed over his fingers. Out of the corner of his eye, he saw a crack in the ice dart swiftly by his foot as its boom resounded in his ears. In panic he turned and started for the boat.

Groping blindly, and wet to the armpits, with each breath he felt a searing pain in his chest. The ice had broken the ten feet to the boat, which was now bobbing on the water like the lifeless decoys. Funny little wooden fakes! They seemed to be smiling at him. Slowly he maneuvered toward the boat, each stroke a struggle for life. He caught its side, but water spilled in. His hands were numb. All feeling was gone and he could hardly move them. He forced himself around to the stern and with one sudden, desperate pull heaved his freezing body half way over the transom. Suddenly with his face under water, he fought for the top. In front of him lay the boat, bottom up and barely afloat. The thing had become a beast turned against him. When he grabbed it, it threw him. The cold was biting clean through his shoulders.

The man remained motionless awhile, no longer shivering. Utter silence drummed its mockery at him. He felt he must shout, but it would be of no use. His thoughts turned now till he was feeling no longer a helpless, struggling creature. He saw his wife sitting on the porch of their house in that lonely valley. How many enjoyable evenings the two of them had had sitting there watching, not speaking, only thinking, only loving. He saw the glorious mountain peaks as they ripsawed through the magnificent fall sunset. Swift swirling flames of scarlet and crimson, their edges were embroidered in golden threads as they lapped at the gates of Heaven! In the midst of that mass of color he saw a lonely opal strip of tender blue, its beaches washed in yellow sand. Then the colors became more subtle, no longer saturated with the heat of the dying sun. That great ball of flame had cooled considerably, and it was vacillating on the vortex of despair. Suddenly it fell, fell swiftly into the valleys beyond, and was gone. The air was still, but pregnant with memories of the day. He followed the sun into the cavernous dark of night.

#### RESPITE

The sun gasps to retain his fading color,  
But surrenders, finally, his rightful throne  
To the half-grown glow of his greedy love, the moon.  
He bows unselfishly to her light, which is nothing  
But himself given to her.

She does not realize, but sends forth her silver  
To starlight streams with self-satisfied pride.

Greed overpowers and soon decays  
What the moon takes without thanks.  
Once again the sun rises, and  
The moon's presence is only a memory.

How much like this we are!

But the moon still shines each night, my dear,  
And if you will, I'll give awhile,  
And you, my love, can rest.

—Susan Moore

## WHY IT IS "GOLDEN"

by Russell Arnold

If *The Ambassadors* and *The Wings of the Dove*, the first two major works of Henry James' final phase, reached back to earlier fiction, James' ultimate novel, *The Golden Bowl*, reveals him breaking new ground and finding a resolution to questions left unresolved in his other novels. His choice of a triangle—husband, wife, mistress—was familiar, but the twist this time was that he married off the mistress to the father of the wife, and made her the stepmother of the betrayed heroine. A subject as "adulterine" as this James had wanted to treat for many years, complaining that the American "family" magazines made him write at the level of adolescents. This time the marriages were not failures: the alliances between European and Americans were consummated, made durable, and possessed a future. To say this is but to give the bold elements of a remarkable work, rich in James' most elaborate metaphor. His exploration of the consciousness of the Italian prince and his American princess is subtle—she at first as innocent and as ignorant as Isabel Archer, in *Portrait of A Lady*. And the prince is an aristocrat, taking life as it comes and ready to ignore his wife if she fails to live up to his high sophistication. She learns actively to "see," and through this awareness triumphs.<sup>1</sup>

Only in *The Golden Bowl* do we find a clever cloak of sensibility between two equally civilized persons. Maggie and Amerigo equal each other in finesse of fiber, in personal timbre, and in degree of civilization, but possess irreconcilable modes of sensibility. Their marriage, which survived one of the worst catastrophes which could happen in a marriage, will never die, because their conflict of sensibility will never be resolved. Maggie and Amerigo will be eternally interested in each other because neither can finally pass judgment on the other.<sup>2</sup>

The first half of the novel sets forth the circumstances by which is built up the strange and wicked balance of relation which groups together Maggie's husband and her father's wife. The second half is devoted to the long process by which Maggie, becoming aware of the situation restores the proper and original balance, and so wins back her husband, making him hers for good. The earliest hint of any uneasiness on Maggie's part is given just before the beginning of the second part of the story in Mrs. Assingham's talk with her husband. Mrs. Assingham's understanding of the situation runs far ahead of Maggie's.

In Maggie's case, realization of evil requires a large allowance of time and endless rumination before it can grow com-

plete and assured. It was just the trait in Maggie that she could not and would not conceive of evil that provoked the situation in which she had to deal with it. So that with her, light breaks very slowly; she will not let it come by more than gradual degrees.

Maggie's strategy is complicated and made difficult by the character of her adversaries and allies. Amerigo and Charlotte are, like Maggie herself, persons who cannot tolerate violence and vulgarity. The last thing she wishes is to humiliate either of them. What she wishes is to give them full opportunity to beat an honorable retreat. No one gives away his hand and in every contact through a series of weeks, each party is feeling his way with the greatest caution. It is some time before Maggie comes to understand what it is that her husband is "growing under cover of" his princely reserve. What he is growing is evidently his policy of joining forces with his wife by keeping Charlotte in the dark as to Maggie's discovery. It is long before Charlotte does see that the game is up and reconciles herself to the necessity of exile. It needs first those tense scenes of confrontation with Maggie, in which the latter, all generous in her position of vantage, gives her opponent no hold or opening for attack.

As for her father, Mr. Verver, Maggie has at first no idea what he knows. Her main instinct is to shield him from knowledge of the situation. His marriage was undertaken with the idea of leaving his daughter freer to enjoy her husband, and Maggie wouldn't for the world have him realize the ironic issue. It turns out that Mr. Verver's chief solicitude is similarly to shield Maggie from the knowledge of his suffering. When they are both morally sure of the full enlightenment of one another, their delicacy and consideration for one another's dignity lead them to continue to the end a difficult policy of bluff.

Meanwhile, obscurely, under all their moves and countermoves, is growing Amerigo's appreciation of Maggie. This is given ample room to spread and reach the stature it shows at the final curtain.<sup>3</sup>

This novel is almost a classic study of the wounded ego (in the conventional, non-Freudian germs of ego psychology), of the desperate manipulations of the self and of others in order to restore the favorable self-image—and of the heedless, blind "triumph" of this formidable type of self love.

FOOTNOTES—<sup>1</sup> Leon Edel, *Henry James* (Minneapolis, 1960), pp. 35-36. <sup>2</sup> Osborn Andreas, *Henry James and the Expanding Horizon* (Seattle, 1948), pp. 168. <sup>3</sup> Joseph Beach, *The Method of Henry James* (New Haven, 1918), pp. 256-8.

## THE LONG WAIT

by Henry Stecker

My name is Wilfred, which means a desire for peace.

I was aptly named, for I and those around me have always desired peace. I am a servant of the State Department of my country, but I no longer have anyone to serve. My masters have all died. Each morning and again each evening, I turn on the radio set in an attempt to contact anyone who may still be alive, but the radio waves are always silent. Each night I scan the sky with my radio-telescope, but only the stars answer my probing. All about me is silence and desolation. Yet things were not always quiet.

Once there was a great deal of life here. I remember it well—the scurrying of men, and the rising of missiles from their launching pads. This place where I am was a military base in those days, and the desire for peace was but a vague hope that somehow the war would come to an end before it was too late for either side to recover. But the war did not end. Missiles continued to rise from their launching sites, and rain down upon the enemy's land. Nor did our lands escape unscathed, for the enemy's missiles were very accurate. At last we stopped sending missiles because we had no more to send. The enemy must have depleted his supply of missiles also, for he sent no more either.

Our scientists left their underground laboratories and made tests of the radiation levels on the surface. They found that radiation was everywhere: in the soil, in surface water, and in the air—and in such high levels of concentration that a return to life on the surface was impossible. So they returned to their underground existence, and there, together with my help, they endeavored to supply their needs as best they could within their shelters.

My masters maintained radio contact with various groups of people in underground shelters all over the world. They maintained contact with the enemy as well, and even went so far as to declare that a state of war no longer existed between any two nations and that as a result, a just and lasting peace had finally come to all peoples of the earth. Thus the friendliest of relations existed among all the people in the shelters.

Then one day, some of the people in a few of the shelters complained of fits of nausea and a general feeling of listless-

ness. In a few days, we heard from other people in those shelters that the sick had died. Within a few weeks, we heard nothing from those shelters at all. These same symptoms began to appear in the other shelters, and then, at last, in ours. The scientists here attributed the cause of our dying to the fact that our shelter got its water supply from an underground spring which, unfortunately, was fed by surface water which filtered down to this level. Within a few days, the scientists and everyone else in our shelter was dead. I alone remained.

I continued to maintain radio contact with other shelters which still contained survivors. Their numbers continued to decrease, however, and finally only one shelter remained that had any survivors. This shelter was nine hundred miles from my location, but still was within the territorial limits of our proud country. It was the people there who told me I must keep a constant vigil for the coming of men. They promised me that somewhere in the vastness of this universe, another race of men must exist and that, since they would not be here to make the first contact with that race, I must be the one to represent mankind and to tell them the glory that was ours and the heights to which we had aspired. They continued to impress me with the necessity of keeping vigilance for that great day of initial contact with another race. They did this until death forever sealed their lips.

I have waited a thousand years, and no race—nothing—has come here. The nuclear reactor which powers this shelter continues to function, and as long as it continues to produce power, I shall have life. Many times I have thought about this vigilance which my masters charged me to keep, and I have decided to end it. It is true that the universe is vast. And it is probably also true that somewhere a race of men does exist. But it is an undeniable fact, I have come to believe, that it is precisely that very vastness which makes the chances of another race's stumbling upon this solar system infinitesimal. Thus I feel that my keeping this vigil is a ridiculous futility.

I have set this down in writing so that if another race **should** come here someday, they will be able to learn of my masters by deciphering this and others of my writings which are in the language of my masters.

I am Wilfred the robot. And I am lonely, and I desire peace—the peace of non-existence. This is why you who are reading this find me here before you, in the likeness of my masters, with my power sack smashed at my feet.

## THE NAKED

By Hans G. Rettig

### DRAMATIS PERSONAE:

ADAM BRUNKBERG, a prominent financier  
ALFRED KASTAKEN, a one-time brilliant lawyer.  
PATTY KNIGHT (Patricia), the intellectual type  
JANE STAINER, likes Adam because of his money  
LOVIN BRUNKBERG, hates brother because of his  
own dependency.  
GEORGE DELDEN, Adam's business associate

TIME: One o'clock in the afternoon.

PLACE: Higgens' Funeral Home.  
(A typical funeral chamber with a slight scent of flowers, etc.)

(As the curtain rises, Brunkberg is looking at the coffin. Kastaken is straightening out five chairs at the center of the stage. Kastaken walks toward Brunkberg)

- KAST: (almost screaming)  
I just can't follow your reasoning!
- BRUNK: (imitating)  
What in the name of hell is there to understand? I'm a sick man! I'm sick!
- KAST: I realize your health is failing, Adam, but this is absolutely monstrous! Your tactics in the past were ruthless. I confess I've had part in your unethical practices. But this is more than I can bear.
- BRUNK: (sarcastically)  
Shall I have to give a chronological account of your monetary success?
- KAST: (bitterly)  
No.
- BRUNK: If you haven't a spark of reason in you, then consider a five thousand dollar bonus a tribute to your undying devotion.
- KAST: I'm sorry, Adam. I guess I wasn't thinking too straight.
- BRUNK: All right, then! Have you made all the necessary arrangements?
- KAST: Yes. The newspapers received the notice of your death yesterday. The invitations have been taken care of.
- BRUNK: Fine. (He looks at the coffin, again, sticks his hand inside. After a brief moment of silence, he removes his hand.)

- KAST: I hope you've given this enough thought. Have you stopped to consider the consequences?
- BRUNK: I'm not toying or playing games. I have reached the end of my life. For once I want to be faced with reality. None of man's hypocrisy or pseudo elegance!
- KAST: I'm sorry, Adam. I didn't mean . . . But do you really think this will succeed?
- BRUNK: God help people if they can't be sincere at a time of sorrow.
- KAST: People are never completely frank or candid, no matter what the circumstances.
- BRUNK: Hm! Man is a maze of complexes; he loses his inner self. If I am correct, my friend Felden and my two sisters and brother will dispense with their usual formal air, and remove those damn masks they assume. Just to make sure, you'll be there to draw out the **truth**.
- KAST: (taken back)  
And just what questions should I ask?
- BRUNK: If you don't know by now, you're a bigger fool than I think.
- KAST: But I'd like to make sure there weren't points you wanted me to bring up. After all, you helped your brother and sister and that new college guy in about every way. Hasn't Levin proven his gratitude?
- (The stage lights dim, and from behind a false pillar, at stage right, Levin appears. Above him there will be a small light, perhaps a flashing one, so that the audience can see his face intermittently.)
- LEVIN: I just can't tell you how much this means to me. After all these years of pounding my head against the wall, and never getting anywhere, this means success. And I owe it all to you. I can't tell you how grateful I am.
- (He faces Adam as he speaks. The lights stay low, so Adam cannot be seen. Then the lights on Levin fade.)
- KAST: I know that Patricia isn't as gracious as she should be. You and I both know she'd be lost without your help.
- BRUNK: We know damn well she couldn't live in the style to which she has become accustomed with-

out my money. It sends her around Europe, helps her entertain her arty friends.

(Pat steps from behind the false pillar at stage left. The same procedure is followed as when Levin appeared at the pillar, stage right.)

PAT: This is the third time my check has been late. I told Mr. Von Thaden at the gallery that I would take Pollock oil. It's very embarrassing to have to hold him up while you decide to give your pittance. If it's conscience money, why how about your method of earning it?

(The light over her goes out, and the regular stage lights fade on again.)

KAST: You can't say Jane doesn't like what your money does for the family.

BRUNK: She wouldn't be married to that rich Jackson if she weren't my sister. The alimony she got from that first bastard certainly wouldn't have kept those two boys of hers in military academy, while she did her husband hunting.

(Jane comes on stage from behind the left pillar.)

JANE: Adam, I just can't thank you enough for giving my boys those two cute motor bikes. And giving me that money to go to the Riviera, where I met my darling Hector. You just can't imagine how exciting it was to rub elbows with those elegant Continentals.

(Light is taken off her, and again thrown on Adam and Al.)

KAST: It's approaching three o'clock. I think you'd better get ready.

(Adam walks over to the coffin, climbs in. Kast is watching his every move. After Adam is in, Kast walks over and takes a look. He stares a second, makes a nod indicating approval.)

(Levin comes in just after Kast turns from the coffin. Levin walks directly to the coffin, stares at his brother long enough to assure himself that he is dead. He then turns to Kast.)

KAST: You're right on time.

LEVIN: (in a hurry)  
To get ahead, one must learn to be punctual. Anyway, I'm completely tied up, and have to follow my schedule. (pauses, looking at the casket) I guess we all have to go sometime.

KAST: It shouldn't come as any surprise to your family. After all, he has driven himself at an inhuman pace.

LEVIN: Yes. He always wanted me to keep up with him. I've always wondered what made him work so hard. I suppose he felt he had to be better than anyone else.

KAST: Think he proved it?

LEVIN: Don't be ridiculous! If I'd had his kind of luck, his wealth would look like nothing next to mine.

KAST: Yes. I suppose luck accounted for a good portion of his wealth.

(Levin looks around the room, then walks over to a chair. Sits down. His two sisters come in through the door. He stands to greet them. Pat says a casual 'hello'. She walks over to the coffin and is greeted by Kast. Levin and Jane are in the background. It is almost impossible to see them because of the dim lighting.)

PAT: Well, now I won't have to depend on those measly little checks he doled out. (She speaks with a sophisticated air. She is dressed in mink; on her head is a striking hat.)

KAST: That did hamper you, didn't it?

PAT: Listen, you have no idea what I had to go through to get that money from him. He had no conscience about taking it from others, so why should I feel remorse?

KAST: But I guess we'll miss him won't we?

PAT: What do you mean? I don't care if this is his funeral. He was a little nickel and dime pawn broker who thought he could rule the world. He was so engrossed in his money making, he never could understand the life I led. He was aesthetically impoverished.

(As she turns to leave, she remembers that her brother is in the casket. She looks at the body, turns in disgust, and then sits down. Levin slides over to join her. Jane stands up and walks over to Kast.)

JANE: Isn't this awful? It will be such a loss to the family.

KAST: Loss? Perhaps. Certainly not financial.

JANE: I was hoping you'd say that. Of course he has always been quite generous to me and my poor little boys. Naturally they were devoted to their uncle. I hope he knew that. (Her voice fades out as she gets to the end of the sentence.)

KAST: I'm sure he took everything into consideration.

JANE: He always understood how important the right background and friends were to a family, especially when there are impressionable young minds. How soon did you say the will is to be read?

KAST: It will have to wait for awhile. I have a lot of other very pressing matters.

JANE: Do you suppose you could tell me if he left anything **for my two boys**? (She tearfully emphasizes the last words.)

KAST: I'm sorry, but I don't know. I have so many matters that have come up, they seem to have absorbed my memory for detail.

(Their conversation is interrupted by the approach of George Felden. Jane sees him walking directly to the casket. He nods his head, as if saying 'hello' to Kast. She senses he wants to speak to Kast, so she does an about-face, and takes a seat.)

KAST: How do you do, Mr. Felden?

FELDEN: Fine, fine! And you?

KAST: (disregarding)  
I was beginning to think you weren't coming.

FELDEN: Of course I had to come to the death of the old and the birth of the new. (A big smile comes on his face. He bends and arches his back as if in a sincere attempt to see Kast.)

KAST: I'm not sure just how I should take that.

FELDEN: It would seem fairly obvious to me that when something has outlived its usefulness, the new should take over where the old left off. Probably, of course, making a few corrections on the way. Don't consider me an opportunist or anything like that. I'm just being realistic . . . I'm tired of taking orders from an old tyrant who has been set in his way because of his senility or what have you. It's a crying shame he was never able to appreciate the talent that surrounded him.

KAST: I suppose you're right. (Kast gives Fel a somewhat dirty look; he is getting sick of the whole affair.)

(Fel seats himself with the rest of the people. The minister comes in and says the usual words. After this, they all stand up and head towards the door. Kast turns around for a second, then puts his one arm over the shoulder of Fel, and more or less helps him out of the door. For a brief second the stage is bare.)

(After Brunk hears the door close, he begins to get out of the coffin. There is a pained expression on his face. He is obviously shaken by what he has heard. He looks around the stage at the chairs, the flowers, the coffin. He buries his head in his hands, and lets out a low, agonized groan. Then he walks over and sits down, stunned.)

BRUNK:  
God, it is true? Please God, tell me, is it true? (looks up as if he were expecting an answer to his question) Is this all my life amounts to? Money? Is there nothing but selfishness, bitterness, envy, and hate in the world? Or is this just the way man is? I can never believe all men are this way. But where have I failed.  
I'll take no revenge on anybody. I know what I'll do. (He is happy, stands up and begins to make a little circle as if he were dancing) I'll have the biggest and best mausoleum that money can buy. I'll have a vault installed that will contain all my money. And I'll seal it against eternity. Nobody . . . but nobody shall touch a dime!

(He thinks a brief second about the word 'rotten' . . . Then, he begins to dance around the room, singing to the tune of "Oh My Darling Clementine:"

WE ARE ROTTEN

WE ARE ROTTEN

WE ARE ROTTEN TO THE CORE!

SISTER, BROTHER, WE ALL USE IT,

PEOPLE DO, AND MORE AND MORE!

Curtain.

## MATRICULATION

by Van Wayne Ward

"Yeh?"

As Pa spoke, the station master came out of the station and set a red lantern and flag on top of my trunk. The train didn't stop at the station unless it was flagged or a passenger wanted off there. Pa glanced up at him almost with relief. He didn't say anything for a long time. He just sat there looking out over the range.

After what seemed like hours, he repeated "Son . . ." He was so ill-at-ease I began to feel terribly self-conscious.

"Yeh, Pa?"

"Son, you're a man now goin' off to college. Your Ma and me, we're proud of you. I hope you know that. We ain't got much, but whatever we have we want to give to you so someday you can have a better life than we've had."

"Thanks, Pa. I appreciate it lots."

Pa had driven me to the depot. He'd been uneasy all morning. At breakfast I would look up and he'd be looking at me; then he would look away. He hadn't eaten much, which I thought was particularly strange. Soon after breakfast, he had loaded up my trunk and suitcase into the old truck. It was only a half hour's drive to the depot but he said the old truck might break down, and he was right. I'd kissed Ma good-bye and she had given me a package of cookies she had baked last night. They were wrapped in white paper and tied with a pink ribbon. I now held the package between my legs as I sat on the running board of the old truck.

"Son, when you get to that big university, you're goin' to meet a lot'a new people like you never met here on the range. Especially women. I ain't said much to you about girls, son, but I expect you know most of what I could tell you anyway. The rest you'll learn soon enough by yourself. It wouldn't make no difference for me to tell you to stay away from girls, so I won't waste my breath. Just be careful, son, that's all."

"Okay, Pa. Don't you and Ma worry. I won't do nothin' you'd be ashamed of." We didn't look at each other.

"Your friends will probably be doin' a lot'a heavy smokin' and drinkin' too, son. Just don't go gettin' in some kind'a trouble with the police that'll get your life all messed up for ya."

"Okay, Pa. Don't worry." Looking for something to ease the tension, we both stared at the sand between our legs.

"And, son, you're goin' to hear and learn a lot'a things your Ma and me ain't never told you about 'cause we don't know them to teach you. And it won't take you long to realize your Ma and me, well, we're pretty dumb, I guess. And after awhile, you won't even want to come home to visit us. You'll have new friends that will be more interestin' than us and the people back here. But that's why we're sendin' you off to college so you can see and learn about the other things in this world. So don't feel too bad when it happens. Your Ma and me, that's what we want."

"Oh, naw, Pa. That won't never happen." We sat there then without saying a word. I knew he said what he had said because he was sad that I was leaving. I played with Tippy, my dog, who had come with us. I'd had Tippy since he was just three weeks old. He was a brown collie-shepherd with a white collar and stomach and a bushy tail with a white tip. I threw a stick and had him bring it back to me. Pa just sat there and watched us.

The train came after awhile and I shook hands and told Pa good-bye at the old truck. I picked up my suitcase and books and walked to where I was supposed to get on the train. I could feel Pa's eyes follow me down the tracks but I didn't look back. I found a seat near the back of the car and sat down in the seat next to the window. I waved good-bye to Pa. I was glad he was quickly out of sight.

The train picked up speed and I listened to the hypnotic sounds of the wheels passing over the seams of the tracks. I thought of what Pa had said. Surely it wouldn't come true. I wondered what the university would be like and the people I'd meet. The car rocked lazily from side to side as I went farther and farther from the ranch.

The train stopped suddenly and I opened my eyes. We were in some small town. I had fallen asleep somewhere along the way. Three people came into the car, two elderly women who were obviously together and a young man with a "State U" sticker on his suitcase like the one I had on mine. He was dressed in white jeans, a blue madras shirt and white sneakers. I felt a little strange dressed in my white shirt and tie. He saw me and started toward me. I don't know if I was glad or mad. He put his suitcase next to mine in the rack above my head.

"Hi! Name's Walt. Walt Wagner." He held out his hand and I shook it.

"I'm Ron Fechner."

"You goin' to the university?" I stared at his shiny black hair. It was cut short and parted on the left side. His eyes were light blue and his complexion light. His features were regular and his teeth were white and evenly spaced. He must have been about my size and weight. "Startin' this term?"

"Yeh."

"Listen, man, let me clue you in. The broads there are something else! There's one chick that lives in Gentry that's a real swinger. If you want I'll fix you up with her for this week-end."

"Naw. Thanks. I think I'll be too busy."

"Listen, man, don't go gettin' all bogged down in the books. You got'a live! When you want some booze, there's this place on Davis Street called "Julie's" that don't ask for ID's."

"Thanks. But I don't think I'll be doin' much drinkin'."

"Listen, man, you're away from your folks now and you, don't have to worry about them buggin' you all the time. It won't take you long to realize how much of life you've been missin', and when you do, you'll forget all about them and their small-time ways. You've got a long way to go yet, kid. Listen, man, I'm so dry I could spit cotton. I've been waitin' on this damned train for hours. Let's go back to the bar and have a beer. I'll buy. Or if you don't want a beer, I'll buy you a coke."

"No thanks. I'm tired. I think I'll get some sleep."

"All right, kid. Suit yourself. But remember what I told you."

I watched him walk to the back of the car and disappear into the next. I was glad he was gone.

A porter entered the car from the opposite end of the car and announced the last call for lunch. I got up and went to the dining car. All the tables were taken, but a girl sat alone at one finishing her coffee. She had blonde hair reaching to her shoulders and blue eyes. Her face was round and not heavily made up. She wore a light blue dress with a loose, boat-neck collar and a long, light blue purse sat on the table. She'd be leaving soon so I walked to the table.

"Mind if I sit here?"

"I don't mind at all, honey. Sit right down."

I sat down in the chair opposite her but on the other end of the table. I reached for the menu, wrote out my order on the check and the porter picked it up. I watched the water sway

in the glass in harmony with the car. She reached in front of me for her purse. She got out her compact, opened it, applied some lipstick and rolled her lips back and forth. All the time she kept her eyes on me. When she put the lipstick on the table, she took out the small powder puff and ran it over her face. I could feel her glance. As she snapped the compact shut and put her lipstick back in the purse, she held my glance.

"Where you goin', honey?"

"To the state university. I'm startin' school there this semester."

"Yeh? I almost went to college myself. But I started workin' and never made it. I live in Grand View now. That's the next stop. Where you from?"

"I live on a ranch near Duke City."

"Yeh? I used to know a man from there. Ted Simms. Ya know him?"

"I don't think so."

"Hey, by the way, what's your name? Mine's Alice. Alice James."

"I'm Ron Fechner."

"Glad to meet cha, Ron. Hey, I've got a great idea. When do you have to be at school?"

"I have to sign up for classes Monday."

"This is Saturday and it's just half over. Why don't you get off with me at Grand View? We'll be gettin' in there in just a few minutes. I know where I can get a car and we'll pick up some beer and go out to this lake that belongs to a friend of mine. We can swim until dark."

"Naw. I'd better go on to school."

"You can catch a train from Grand View Sunday night that'll get you there in plenty of time."

"Naw. I'd better not."

"What's the matter kid? Afraid of havin' some fun?"

"I don't know what you mean by havin' fun."

"Come on kid! You can't be that stupid!"

"Besides, I haven't got any money."

"Who said anything about money? What we'll be doin' won't cost anybody anything. This guy that owns the lake also owns a hotel to go along with it and he'll put you up for nothin'.

He'll probably have some other people in tonight and we'll have one hell of a good time."

"I . . . I can't."

"Why not kid? Ya scared?"

"No. I just can't. That's all."

"Stop bein' so damned dumb kid. I'm not goin' to hurt cha."

"I know that. But what would my . . .?"

"Who's goin' to know anything? I never saw you before and you never saw me. The guy that owns the hotel sure as hell ain't goin' to say anything. He's makin' all the money he can spend. It'll be great and then you can forget the whole damned thing."

"I'd better not."

"Why not kid? Just give me one good reason why not."

"I just don't think I should."

"What's the matter kid? Are you a sissy? I bet I wouldn't have to ask any other man on this train twice."

"No, damn it! I'm not a sissy."

"Well, then, why not?"

"All right, damn it! All right. I'll get off with you."

"Now that's more like it. We'll be gettin' into Grand View in less than ten minutes. You gobble down your lunch and I'll go get my things and freshen up. I'll meet you at the door where we get off."

"But what about my trunk?"

"Leave it on the train. You can pick it up at the depot Sunday."

She left and I ate my sandwich which had been served long ago. By the time I finished, went back to the coach, got my suitcase and things and got to the door, the train was already slowing for the stop. Alice was already there.

"Listen, Ron, there may be someone at the station to meet me. If there is, I'll get rid of him and we'll be all set. You just pretend you don't know me. All right?"

The train stopped and we got off. Alice looked around. I saw a man leaning against a car parked near the station. He was tall, real tall, but thin. He had brown curly hair and wore dark sunglasses. He had on an olive green suit with tight pants. The coat was tight but was made that way, probably tailored. His shirt cuffs showed below his coat sleeves and had huge cuff links. His whole appearance was "sharp." Alice ran up to him,

threw her arms around his neck and kissed him. She didn't look back at me. I walked to the corner of the station near the car, set my suitcase down and leaned against the station. I watched some men unloading freight from the train. I couldn't help hearing Alice and the man talking.

"Jim, some business has come up that I've got to see to this weekend. I'll see you Monday night. Okay?"

"What kind'a business?"

"Just somethin' that might be very interestin'."

"Look, baby, if you're makin' any money on the side, I want to know about it."

"Why should you care? You're gettin' a free ride aren't cha?"

"Ya, I've had my fun and it hasn't cost me anything but the clothes you wear cost more than what I'm paying you to work at that damned restaurant I own. You're makin' some money on the side somewhere, baby, I bet it's at that damned hotel on Fifth Street."

"Look, Jim. Just because I work for you at the restaurant doesn't mean you own me. I'm a big girl now."

"I'm warnin' you Alice, you'd better tell me where you're gettin' all your money."

"It's none of your damned business where I get my money. If you think I need you, you're crazy. I can make all the money I want anytime I want."

I looked at the men unloading the train. They put the last bag on the cart and started pulling it away. The conductor stood near the train talking to the brakeman. I glanced back at Alice. The man was looking at the ground. She smiled and winked at me. I looked back at the train. The conductor reached for the handgrip and waved to the engineer. I looked at Alice. She and the man called Jim had moved to the driver's side of the car and she was kissing him. I grabbed my suitcase and ran for the train. It had started moving by the time I was on.

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Christmas holidays. The train would be pulling into Duke City soon and I'd be home. Somehow I dreaded it. I'd been going home less and less the past three years. I thought of that first train ride to the university. I smiled at how embarrassed I'd been. It seemed so unreal then, but now I am a senior.

The train slowed and the conductor announced Duke City.

I collected my things and went to the door. The train stopped and I got off. Ma and Pa were waiting for me. Ma ran up and kissed me on the cheek and Pa shook my hand.

"How's school, son?" Pa asked.

"Fine, Pa."

"Been studyin' hard?"

"Ya, pretty hard."

"Well now, let me see," Ma said. "I told you about Mrs. Carter falling and breaking her hip, didn't I? Mr. Carter's been takin' care of himself since his wife's been in the hospital. Been gettin' along pretty well I guess. I stopped by to check on him the other day when Pa and I went into town. He was doin' just fine."

"That's good." We got to the car and got in. Ma hardly slowed down enough for us to get into the car.

"Did you know that Mr. Spencer is selling the feed store? I think they're movin' to Arizona to be with Bobby. That's their oldest boy. He's a good bit older than you. I doubt if you remember him."

"No, I don't. Do you know when they're leavin'?"

"No, not for sure. It won't be before summer, I don't think. That reminds me, speakin' of summer. They're supposed to build a new market in Duke City that'll be open by June. I'm not sure where it's going to be put. It sure will be a big help."

By the time we got home, I was well up on all the local gossip. I unpacked and got cleaned up. Supper was ready by the time I finished. During dinner, the talk was again about the ranch, the neighbors, the people in town, the town itself and other things. When we had finished eating, Ma started clearing away the dishes.

"Ron, will you help me with the dishes while your father gets cleaned up? Aunt Mary and Uncle Paul are coming over this evening to visit with you. They'll be here in half an hour and I don't want dirty dishes settin' on the table when they come."

"Ma, I can't. A friend of mine is coming by in a few minutes and we're goin' over to Trail Pass. I've got a date with Janet tonight."

"Janet?" Ma asked. "Is that the girl you met at school?"

"Yeh."

"I remember her. Doesn't she have an uncle they put in

prison for something or other?"

"Yeh, but he's out on parole now and he's a nice man. I've met him."

"But son, do you think you should be goin' with a girl whose uncle has been in the penitentiary?"

"Ma, I said I thought he was a nice man and besides, that has nothing to do with Janet."

"What about her parents? What does her father do?"

"They're both dead. They died when their house burned down. Janet's livin' with her uncle now."

"My goodness, son, do you think he would be a very good influence on her? And anyway, Trail Pass is almost thirty miles away. You'll be late gettin' home. And what will Aunt Mary and Uncle Paul say? After all, it's your first night home and they're coming over just to see you."

"I'm sorry Ma, but you should've asked me before you told them to come over."

"Well, I thought you'd be here your first night home and that would be a good time for them to see you."

"Now Ma," Pa cut in, "we should have checked with Ron. He's a big boy now and has his own life to lead."

A car honked outside. I got my jacket, kissed Ma and said good-bye. I gave a sigh of relief as I walked out the door. I hardly said a word all the way to Trail Pass. I kept thinking about the way things were at home now. What had made the difference? Was it school and the things I had learned? Or was it I? Things were sure different now.

I didn't get home until the next morning about nine. Janet was with me. Ma and Pa were waiting for me in the living room. I knew there was going to be a scene.

"Young man, where have you been all night?" Ma snapped with a look in her eyes I hadn't seen since I was a child.

"Ma, just calm down and I'll explain. I'd like you to meet Janet Bell. Janet, this is my mother and father."

Janet said, "Hi."

"Hello," Ma snapped. "Now son, just where have you been all night?" Pa had stood up when I introduced Janet but had sat down again and was looking at me.

"Janet's uncle had an acute attack of appendicitus last night and had to be operated on. We stayed at the hospital until about two this morning. We were all so tired by then that we

decided it wouldn't be safe to drive back so we stayed in a hotel. Janet was so upset that she was afraid to stay by herself so she stayed in the hotel with my friend and me. We got up this morning and went back to the hospital and found Mr. Bell much better. Janet was still pretty upset so I asked her to come here and stay until tonight when I would take her back to Trail Pass."

"Why didn't you call us?"

"Things happened so fast that I didn't even think of it until early this morning. I didn't see any sense in calling you out of bed at that hour. I thought you'd know I was all right or you'd have heard otherwise."

"And what do you mean by spending the night with this girl in a hotel?"

"Ma, I told you that she was too upset to stay by herself and that's all there was to it. I don't know what you are thinking but I don't think I like it. You and Pa raised me and taught me to be a good boy. Why can't you trust me now?"

"Just what do you expect me to believe when you say you spent the night in a hotel with a girl you've known so little and whose uncle who raised her has been in the penitentiary."

"Ma, I think you've said quite enough. I told you what happened and if you don't want to believe me, that's not my fault."

"Well, son, I don't think I want a girl like that staying in my house."

"Ma!" Pa said.

"Ma!" I echoed. "I thought this was my house too and you would believe me and trust me. I'm not a boy anymore. I'm twenty-two years old and I've put myself through most of my college years what with scholarships and working in the summers."

"I don't care. I said I didn't want that girl stayin' in my house."

"Ma, if Janet can't stay, I won't either."

"Son, you don't mean that!" Pa said.

"Yes, Pa, I do."

"Suit yourself, son. But that girl is not stayin' in this house."

"All right, Ma. I'm leaving! And I'm not coming back."

"No, Ron. It's all right. I'll leave," Janet said.

"Not without me."

"Ma, what's got into you? This is our son!" Pa said. "Ron, here are the keys to the car. Take them and go into town for awhile. I'll talk to Ma, and you and Janet come back about noon and have dinner."

"Thanks, Pa. But I don't think it will do much good now."

We left. I was so mad I was shaking. I felt like crying. I knew I no longer belonged in my own home. Ma and Pa and I were worlds apart. I knew I could never go there again and feel the same.

## THE BEST

by Joe Sanford

A lot o' folks think that Jed Roberts is the best darn hunter an' fisherman this side of the Mississippi, an' I ain't one ta argue with the majority, but in the old days, when me 'n Jed was a growin' up together in the backhills of the Missouri Ozark Mountains, I guess I might o' been jes a little bit better.

I remember one Sunday afternoon particular, when Coon Dawn County Fair was a havin' one o' tha biggest huntin' and fightin' contests, one o' tha biggest huntin' an' fishin' contests a feller'd want to see. Me'n Jed had both entered, knowin' one another was the best an' second best (we both liked to think we was the best) fisherman an' hunter in these parts. Tha rules of the contest stated one feller was ta be given one rifle, one bullet, one fishin' pole, line, hook 'n worm. With this paraphernalia, all of us fellers was sent out on our own to shoot 'n catch as much game 'n fish as we could with one rifle, one bullet, one fishin' pole, line, hook 'n worm. Well, me 'n Jed 'n all tha other fellers all went our sep'rate ways, each of us thinkin' he knew tha best place ta hunt 'n fish.

I had walked only about ten miles, when a big Missouri razor-back hog jumped in front of me just a snappin' his jaws and a grittin' his teeth somethin' turr'ble. This give me quite a start, but I soon got back my wits an' thinkin' I better not waste my only bullet on him, I quick-like pulled off one o' my big huntin' boots an' chucked it at the big hog. Well, I hit that hog right between the eves an' killed him plum dead. I field-cleaned him in about a minit (that's purty slow, but I hadn't field-cleaned a hog in a couple o' years an' was kinda rusty.)

I started out a walkin' again, lookin' for a good shot with my only bullet. After 'bout a hour of passin' up shots, I just happen' ta spot with my extra-keen eyes, a big buck deer an' in a tree jus' above it, a row of five wild turkeys, sittin' on one o' tha branches. This seemed a good shot to take, so I began stalkin' tha deer, keepin' tha turkeys in the corner o' my eye at tha same time. I kep' a sneakin' an' kep' a watchin' an' was jus' beginning ta get discouraged with tha idea of gittin' all o' 'em in one shot, when I noticed a large rock sittin' at jus' tha right angle between the buck an' tha turkeys.

I located myself at tha exact spot, drew a bead on tha five gobblers and shot 'em all five right through tha eyes. The bullet which I had aimed at the prisise angle, glanced off o'

tha rock an' struck tha buck square in tha heart. Jus' a mediocre shot, but it work'd. So, after cleanin' this game, I jus' kep' a walkin', lookin' for a good spot ta use my only worm an' maybe catch some wopper fish. I look'd 'n look'd till I finally happened on a small, fast-flowin' creek that look'd promisin'. Tha only problem was that my nat'ral instinct told me tha other bank was a better place ta fish, so I started searchin' for a place to cross.

It just so happened there was a big log that had fallen over tha creek, about a mile up stream, so's I started a walkin', catlike, 'cross tha log. I don' know what happened, I mus' a had a rare dizzy spell. At any rate, I lost my footin' an' fell, splash, right in tha middle of that fast-flowin' creek. Me bein' the great swimmer that I am, I had a dickens of a time swimmin' with them five turkeys, hog an' buck on my back, but I managed ta struggle ta the bank, and climb onta dry ground. The darndest thing, though! I must o' fell right in tha middle o' a big school o' Jack Salmon, 'cause when I climbed out o' that creek, my coveralls an' big red huntin' shirt was jus' chuck full o' Jack Salmon. Not the biggest fish, you understand; there wasn't one over ten pounds. But I did get a few—twenty three, to be exac'. Tha funniest thing was when I climbed out o' that creek, I was so overloaded with them fish tha big brass button that held my coveralls up, popped right off, an' went a flvin' across tha creek an' killed three squirrels a sittin' on a stump a watchin' me near drown ta death.

After a cleanin' all them fish an' them three squirrels, I started in ta fish for a whopper, but found I lost my only worm, so, bein' tha good sport that I am, I decided ta head back ta tha fair an' present what I thought was tha winnin' bag o' one hog, one buck, five turkeys, twenty-three Jack Salmon, an' three squirrels, all expertly got with one rifle, one bullet, one pole, one line, one hook 'n one worm which I lost. But that dam dum Jed Roberts brought in jus' as much as I did, plus tha biggest, meanest lookin' Missouri grizzly bear I ever seen. He won first prize.

To my way o' thinkin', Jed must o' cheated a little bit, an' took a extra bullet ta kill that bear. I ain't no one ta complain, though. I jus' took my second-place trophy, an' left that fair an' ta this day. I still think I'm tha best darn hunter an' fisherman west o' tha Mississippi.

## WALK WITH ME TO REMEMBRANCE

by Charles Dugan

It is warm and clear with just a wisp of a spring breeze; the sky is a blue diamond, the kind you can feel; and here sit I. It is a beautiful day for a picnic in a shady grove under a graceful oak with its long, out-stretched branches giving shade from the glowing brilliance of the sun, but here sit I. I want to walk to a spot I used to know in a small valley. It had a little brook running through it. Let me see whether I can take you to that valley.

It was just over a hill not far away, in a clearance filled with gracefully blowing ferns and lazy flower beds engulfed in the sun's warmth. Just beyond was a little patch of woods. I called it my little forest. Oh, how I loved that small group of trees. I knew them by heart at one time, the great old sycamore and the little patch of white birches. The white birches were always my favorites. Their bark was white and smooth, broken only by the rings that embraced them; and the velvety soft moss that gathered at their feet was cool and clean to the touch.

But now I'm off the track. I was going to take you to my valley, wasn't I? Now, just past my little forest was a bridle path. It looked almost planned, the way the trees gave the effect of a canopy draped gracefully over the path. The grass under my feet was soft and warm. I used to love to walk beside that path in my bare feet and let the soft warmth of grass come between my toes, and every now and then I would stop along the way to touch a new flower and feel the silkiness of its petals.

Now where was I? I must remember my destination is my valley. Just past the bridle path you made a left turn, and after a number of yards you came to a looking glass pool. Not a ripple could be seen, and the white sand at its deepest part was a mere foot from the surface. This pool was the scene of many great adventures for me. I saw faces in its depths, some gay with eyes clear as the pool that reflected them, some ugly with wrinkles made by fallen tears on the smooth surface of the pool; but here I go again, away from my story.

Once having reached the pool you were almost there; it was just a short walk through a patch of moist clover and up a hill. On the hill lay a tiny waterfall, with its cool water running swiftly down the slope over round stones made smooth by

years of tumbling water. I loved to walk without my shoes through the clover field and run to the top of the hill and there dangle my toes gently in the cool spring water and turn a stone or two with my big toe. My greatest delight was sipping the water as it skipped to the pool below. The water was crystal clear and so clean that it seemed to give me life, to bring me closer to the things I loved best. But, I'm off again, and really we're almost there. Just past the slope and waterfall lay my valley and my brook. The sides of my valley broke gently away from the valley bed and the trees on the slope were tall and beautiful. In the center of the valley lay a brook. My valley was the perfect spot for a picnic.

If you ever want to go there and can't remember just where it is, ask me, because I'd love to guide you there.

Why, look how late it's getting to be. I bet I've delayed you too long. Anyway, just remember about the valley. Now if you'll do me a small favor, give me a hand and help me turn this wheel chair of mine around.

#### THE TRAIL

After a day on the range and far from dull,  
A cowboy likes to kick off his boots, and may  
Sit wonderingly under a moon that's round and full,  
Thinking of joys he had while out on the trail.  
But when the cowboy's work has come to an end,  
Because of machines and all that modern trend  
That seems so all impossible to fail,

He just lies back and heaves a tired sigh,  
And waits for fate concerned with a coming grave;  
He is outdated . . . . But then, by and by,  
Other cowboys like him, who have been brave  
Join him in a paradise. It will be when  
They all ride out upon the trail again.

—Joe Sanford

#### TWO HAIKU

by Van Wayne Ward

1

The lone pine tree moans  
with the coming of March winds:  
murmurs of spring floods.

2

The white heron stands  
motionless in the water;  
minnows are so fleet.

#### ILLUMINATION

Lone neon lamp on a study desk.  
Enough light,  
My roommate is asleep.  
The clock rhythms the dreary hours.  
Black night,  
Late, deathly quiet.

Neon lamps—  
They burn on Broadway,  
Streets as light as day!  
The city screams with life  
At this same hour:  
Laughing, honking, blinking, coming, going!  
"Early morning edition?  
Buy it here!"

I concentrate on the page;  
The neon lamp glows.  
Enough light,  
Study!

—Van Wayne Ward

## NEIGHBORS

Now Willie Johnson, yesterday,  
He make a face at me an' say  
He's glad he ain't no li'l ole girl,  
Cause he don' have no hair to curl,  
An' his face don' have to be washed clean,  
So's I tolled him he was mean.

Then me an' Willie Johnson fight.  
I know that girls mus' be polite,  
So's I jes' knocked off Willie's hat,  
An' give him jes' a li'l pat  
Upside the jaw. An' he jes' cry  
An' runned home, like he's afraid he'd die.

Pretty soon his mama come,  
An' looked at me like I'se a bum;  
She had that tored-up hat o'his,  
An' went right in where my ma is.  
Then Willie comed back with his pup,  
An' say, "Hello," so's we maked up.

We got to playin' circus show,  
With his pup lion, me screamin', "Go!"  
An' then our mas boft comed out,  
His ma still scoldin' my ma about  
Me slappin' him, an' they boft say:  
"Hereafter keep your child away!"  
Then they see us a-playin' there,  
An' they boft say, "Wal, I declare!"

—Susan Moore

## AT THE END OF THE COLLEGE YEAR

Now that the year is about to be written into the last unknown  
in a blue book,  
To become cadential in protests against grades posted in halls;  
Now that the heat of summer clutches at soil,  
And the violence of tornadoes troubles the night,  
As if what had found a direction for months  
Erupted to forms undefined,  
The college year ends.  
The result is intangible,  
Except in meaningless words over punch bowls,  
Or displays of key pins or awards  
By who seems to merit them least.  
There is no unity ciphering those who depart  
To homes they are no longer fashioned to fit;  
No external signs  
Like cool carpets from blades of grass,  
Or blossoms unfurling above the ground.  
There seems irretrievable loss,  
Something to never recur,  
Never to find itself summed,  
Nor emerge from destroying whatever was won.  
This makes for  
Sadness,  
That is neither commencement nor joy  
For all that is now left behind  
In a measured approach to pangs by which men mature  
Through the measurelessness of the mind.

—Gy

"NOR SHALL DEATH BRAG . . . ."

I wondered why the rose in my backyard

Died before becoming fully grown;

I wept to see a loveliness unmarred

Meet death before its beauty had been shown.

A lowly dandelion also died

Before it reached compete maturity,

And neither could its death be justified,

Both rose and weed were beautiful to me.

O, if my life should also pass away

Before my plans and hopes become complete,

I cringe to think today might be the day

Success for which I planned becomes defeat.

O, death, be kind, nor prematurely stain

What happiness becomes me to obtain.

—Van Wayne Ward